

Medical education in the UK

Medical education in the UK covers:

- **undergraduate** education – four or five years at **medical school**, the section of a university responsible for medical education
- a two-year **Foundation Programme** which provides training for new doctors after **graduation** through a series of placements in different specialties
- **postgraduate** training which doctors take to become GPs or **consultants** – senior specialists – often delivered through **colleges** for different specialties, for example the Royal College of Physicians
- **continuing professional development** in the form of courses and seminars, which doctors undertake throughout their working lives to keep up to date.

Extract from an undergraduate prospectus

<p>The MBChB (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) is a five-year undergraduate medical degree course. Most of your learning takes place in small groups. The main components are:</p>	
<p>Core (Years 1-3) An integrated programme of clinical and scientific topics mainly presented through problem-based learning (PBL), where you work with others on a series of case problems.</p>	<p>Vocational Studies and Clinical Skills This component prepares you for the clinical skills required for contact with patients from Year 1 of your course, through periods of practical training where you are attached to a hospital department or general practice.</p>
<p>Student Selected Modules Student selected modules (SSMs) allow you to choose from a menu of subjects such as Sports Medicine or even study a language as preparation for an overseas elective, a hospital attachment of your own choice, between Years 4 & 5.</p>	<p>Clinical Attachments (Years 4 & 5) A series of four-week clinical attachments in Medicine, Surgery, Psychological Medicine, Child Health, Obstetrics & Gynaecology and General Practice.</p>

A student's view

Ellen, a medical student, describes her course.

'I'm just finishing my first year of Medicine. What I like about this course is that you're involved with patients from the very beginning. Even in our first year, we spend time in hospital. Much of the course is PBL. We have two 2-hour sessions a week where we work in groups of eight to ten solving clinical problems. We decide together how to tackle the problem, look up books and online sources, make notes and discuss the case together. It's a great way of learning and getting to know the other students. In the past, medical students had **lectures** with the whole class taking notes from lecturers from 9.00 to 5.00, but now it's mainly group work, although we do have some lectures and **seminars**, where we worked in small groups with a tutor. I like all of it, even the **dissection**. We get to cut up **cadavers** from the second month of the course.'

Match these activities to the stages of medical education in the UK.

- 1 dissecting cadavers
- 2 keeping a log of surgical procedures observed and performed
- 3 working for four months in accident and emergency to experience this specialty
- 4 taking a four-week attachment in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- 5 taking an online course on recent developments in cardiovascular disease

Complete the sentences.

- 1 Just before their final year, students have the chance to take an _____ in a hospital of their choice anywhere in the world.
- 2 _____ - _____ contrasts with an approach where each subject is taught separately.
- 3 These days _____ are often interactive, with regular opportunities for the students to ask questions.
- 4 In _____ students learn how to treat and manage patients.
- 5 _____ can be a topic from outside medicine, such as a foreign language.
- 6 Dissection of _____ is an important part of the anatomy component.
- 7 The _____ at the University of Edinburgh is one of the oldest in the UK.
- 8 She's a _____ at the Royal; one of the leading paediatric heart specialists in the country.
- 9 The Royal _____ of Surgeons in Edinburgh dates from 1505.
- 10 We have a _____ each week where we discuss topics in a small group with our lecturer.

Match each of these activities to one of the components of the undergraduate course.

- 1 Julie spends six weeks working in a small hospital in the Himalayas.
- 2 A group of students discuss together the possible reasons for abdominal pain after meals in an obese 44-year-old male.
- 3 A small group of students trace the pulmonary artery in a cadaver.
- 4 Otto spends a month working in the paediatric ward of the local hospital.
- 5 Anne learns how to take blood from an elderly patient.
- 6 Juma chooses to study Travel Medicine in his fourth year.

Express your idea.

Describe the main components of your undergraduate course.